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by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodidār*) and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairkuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 55.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bata who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

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THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

The Gondi words used to describe masturbation, *bonde harsāna* for the male, *penda harsāna* for the female, meaning 'penis game' and 'vagina sport', do not suggest any high degree of social condemnation. *Bonde harsāna* is in contrast to *bonde endanna*, the 'penis dance'; as I show elsewhere, *harsāna* and *endanna* do not differ so much in form as in occasion. *Bonde harsāna* then is the satisfaction gained out of due order, in the wrong way perhaps, yet only a game. *Bonde endanna* is the legitimate, sanctioned, dutiful performance of the penis on the dancing-ground of the vagina at the festival of sex. Sex is a holy thing, a marriage or a festival, and you do not play games at a festival. 839

Homosexual practices are very rare. There is the usual coarse play among boys; they catch hold of each others' genitals; they sometimes ride on each other in imitation of the normal sexual act; in Nayanar little boys were taught to massage the legs of their elders. There was a story in Dongrigura of two chelik who practised mutual masturbation, and in the same ghotul two little girls were caught 'lying together like man and wife'. Boys often embrace, sit in one another's arms, sleep together on their narrow mats under a single blanket—but this is all part of the general affection and intimacy of ghotul life. An experienced police official has told me that he has never known a case of sodomy from the ghotul, and the jail authorities in Jagdalpur, some of whom have had from twenty to thirty years' experience, say that homosexual interests are never manifested by the aboriginal prisoners.[1] 838

Erotic zoophilia is less common, as we might expect, than among other peasants, for at least in its more bestial forms it is, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the sexual anomaly of dull, insensitive and unfastidious peasants . . . the vice of the clod-hopper who is unattractive to women or inapt to court them'.[2] But the chelik are not dull, insensitive and unfastidious, still less are they inapt to court women. Both boys and girls, however, enjoy the mixoscopic aspect of zoophilia, though Bindo's statement that 'fish copulate like snakes, winding round each other' does not seem to reveal very accurate observation. The chelik often dress up as animals and simulate their copulation. 839

There is no specific word in Gondi for bestiality, which is regarded as ludicrous and unnecessary rather than repulsive. Like all deviations, it is supposed to belong to the civilized world rather than to the Muria Raj. The chelik recall how it was a Gond of Kanera who was jailed for going to a she-goat and a Rawat of Bayanar who was caught with his cow. At Ulera they talk about a Ganda who went to his mare. Members of these castes can hardly perhaps be called 'civilized', but the Muria regard them as Hindus and representative of a different culture.

Allen points out that 'many animals are unsuitable for sexual approach except sadistic ones, but no doubt whole hecatombs of animals have perished for this reason'.[3] The Muria are kind and gentle to animals, though a drunken priest may sacrifice a pig or cock with some cruelty.

behaviour began after a time and developed in proportion to the period of segregation. M. Jenkins, *Genetic Psychological Monographs* (London, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 457ff.

[1] Writing of the Ho, Majumdar has suggested that their low fertility rate may be due to sterility induced by a 'homosexual fixation'. 'The institution of village dormitories definitely fosters homosexuality. There is a system of fagging in these dormitories. The smaller boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, comb their hair, and play the part of girls.'—D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 72. Unfortunately we know nothing about the Ho dormitories, and without knowing Majumdar's evidence, which he does not present, it is difficult to discuss his suggestion. But from a very brief investigation, it was evident that in the Ho dormitories the girls were segregated, and there is thus a different situation from that in Bastar.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (London, 1934), p. 154.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 85.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●839 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. Ceremonial Cross-dressing

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency: sometimes it

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33. [2] Ibid., p. 35.
[3] R. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 318ff.

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X883 834 It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupul Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

X883 839 838 Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

X883 831 So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbath, op. cit., p. 361. [2] Ibid., p. 366.

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We may then consider how the ghotul boys and girls are almost completely free from those furtive and unpleasant vices that so mar our Western civilization. There is hardly any masturbation, the scourge of the English Public Schools; where it is practised, it is due to the mistaken efforts of reformers to improve the ghotul. Prostitution is unknown, unthinkable. No motiari has ever given her body for money. Homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality are shocking things, unworthy of chelik or motiari and never indulged by them. Nor does Muria society know the thin frustrated spinster or the male neurotic so prolific in the modern Indian 'ashram', with his desiccated outlook and censorious judgements.

These are great gains. At the same time we must not forget that there are many things in our own society which would shock and offend the Muria. A chelik would be scandalized by the Public Schools in England—the atmosphere of competition, the corporal punishment, the bullying, the petty tyranny of senior boys, the segregation with its attendant vices, the common homosexual interests, the furtiveness of association with girls, the worship of sport which has no connexion with real life. The prostitution in our cities would seem to him an abomination, and he would be filled with pity for the unmarried together with a dread of what would happen to them after death.

He would find a wholesale disregard of right and proper taboos. The missionary probably kisses his mother and sister, and certainly allows his wife to cook and touch water during her menstrual period—things which would horrify the Muria. The Hindu is often criticized by the Muria for allowing his children to sleep in the same room as their parents, which the Muria thinks far more immoral than sending them to sleep with other children in the ghotul. The sanitary arrangements of many a Brahmin home offend the Muria and he considers the Hindu attitude to untouchables, widow-remarriage and purdah as unworthy and degrading. If he is reflective enough, he will equally insist that the Westerner whose civilization is characterized by all the anti-social vices, violence, jealousy, adultery, and war, is not in a position to criticize his quiet, peaceful, happy, useful ghotul.

Although observers of similar institutions in other cultures have generally been impressed by their virtues and social value, there have been exceptions. In an early work S. C. Roy called the Uraon dormitory an 'abomination',[1] though I believe his opinion altered later. Dalton thought that intercourse in a dormitory 'must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'.[2] In a very early account of the Seneca Indians of Canada, Cartier says, 'They have a very bad custom with their daughters, for as soon as they are of age to go to man, they put them in a bawdy-house, and abandon them to anyone who will take them, until they meet with a suitable party. And this we have seen by experience, for we saw those houses as full of girls as a school in France is full of children'.[3]

In the Marianne Islands, the missionaries found themselves opposed by the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* and, regarding only the sexual relations of the girls and boys, declared that '*le Démon a établi icy des Seminaires de débauche*', while another writer described the purpose of the Uritoi societies of Guam as '*un épicurisme grossier*'.[4]

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248.
[3] J. Cartier, *Briefz récit de la navigation faict en MCDXXXV et MCDXXXVI*, first published in Paris in 1654. Quoted by Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 34.
[4] Quoted from Le Gobien, *Histoire des Iles Marianes*, p. 61, and L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1826–44). Vol. II, p. 369 by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

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her back. Then he would beat her ferociously and helped by his relatives would rub into the wounds the juice of the marking-nut (*Semecarpus anacardium*, Linn.). This juice is a powerful irritant and when applied to the skin desiccates strongly, raising black blisters. Months after Mundra's death the marks of injuries were clearly visible on the unfortunate woman's body.

The last week of Mundra's life was fully occupied in chasing his wife. It appears as though he was really fond of her or at least really desired her in a sadistic manner, and he probably got considerable pleasure out of torturing her. On 20 October he went with his father to Lakhopal where they had heard Pande was hiding. They sent a villager ahead to call the girl, and she came trembling out of the house and hid below a tree. Mundra and his party then forcibly took her home to Tikanpal. That same night she ran away again. On the third day Mundra set out once more in search of her. They heard that she had again gone to Lakhopal and this time, when Mundra found her, he decided not to go home but to take her to a Siraha at Killepal in order to get her exorcized of the evil spirit which, he had decided, was the real cause of her continually leaving him. This is sometimes done when a cow refuses to stay with the herd or fails to return to its own shed at night. The Siraha is called in and divines what ancestor or godling is causing the trouble, whereupon suitable remedies are adopted. Sometimes these remedies may be unpleasant, including the burning of chillies under the nose, beating with an old shoe or making the patient drink urine.[1] It is little wonder that poor Pande regarded this suggestion with alarm.

On the evening of that day a witness remembered meeting an unknown man and woman on the boundary of Kaklur

[1] How severe these remedies sometimes are may be seen in the circumstances of a case at Mandla in 1925. A Rajput youth became strange in his manner after witnessing a melodrama and his trouble was diagnosed as spirit-possession. He was first tied to a pole in the courtyard. Then his elder sister fell into a frenzy; she swallowed a live bit of coal, declared she was possessed by Kali, and sacrificed her little daughter to that goddess in an attempt to restore her brother's sanity. This remedy failing, the unfortunate youth's hands were burned and he was tied naked in a place generally used by a harmless lunatic with a local reputation for sanctity. Here he died of exposure.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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697 killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

697 838 839 These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

697 831 What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).